

## 1 Samuel 27 - Thursday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014

- By way of an introduction, I should probably apprise you of what lies ahead for us beginning in this chapter as it relates to the life of David.
- He is about to make a very bad decision, and as such, it will lead to yet another low point that makes it sort of hard to read and study about.
- If you're anything like me, and I suspect you are, we find we're, vicariously in a way, going through all the ups and downs along with David

1 And David said in his heart, "Now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me anymore in any part of Israel. So I shall escape out of his hand."

- There are a couple of things we need to take note of right out of the shoot, the first of which is where we're told, "David said in his heart."
- This is David's first mistake, and it will prove to be a very costly one, such that he's talking to himself, instead of talking to God in prayer.
- If there was ever a time that David needed to seek the Lord it was now, this because, he's descending into the depths of discouragement.

I like how one commentator said it, "David is in a state of despondency... After he had shown such great faith as that recorded in Chapter 26, how could he make the statement recorded in 27:1? We, also, after moments of triumph, often experience a temporary breakdown in our faith. Abraham, Jacob, Elijah, John the Baptist, etc., all had these fainting fits."

- Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a moment as I share with you four dangers of discouragement that I found woven into just this first verse.

1. Discouragement can strip me of all my desire to seek the Lord in prayer, which in turn will lead to my taking matters into my own hands.

- David's prayerlessness is, in effect, his way of saying, God won't protect me from Saul, so I need to figure out how to protect myself.

2. Discouragement will propel me to manufacture perilous scenarios, which have no basis in reality and are contrary to the Word of God.

- This is textbook in the sense that David, in his discouragement, is resigning himself to this perilous fate, in spite of God's promise to him.

3. Discouragement leads me to look for a way out as an escape from the difficulty, which in turn will lead me to drawing false conclusions.

- The problem with all of this is that David is wrongly concluding that Saul will give up looking for him if he just runs away from the situation.

One commentator had a very interesting take on this, Before David trusted in the LORD to protect him from the hand of Saul. Now, David gave up trusting in the LORD and instead left the land of promise, left the people of God, and found "protection" among the Philistines. Saul will not despair if David leaves the land of promise. Saul will not despair if David forsakes the people of God and joins the ungodly. It is David who is in despair, not Saul. Saul could never drive David to the Philistines. If Saul told David, "You must leave the people of God and go live among the Philistines," David would never bow to it. But discouragement and despair are more powerful enemies than Saul. Discouragement and despair will drive David to do something that Saul could never make him do.

4. Discouragement causes me to distance myself from God and even from God's people, which in turn leads me towards ungodly people.

- If you really think about it, David has basically decided that he would be better off if he were with the Philistines instead of his own people.
- When this happens, we cut ourselves off from the very people who God will often times use as an encouragement and speak into our lives.

Charles Spurgeon - "I remember on one occasion, to my shame, being sad and doubtful of heart, and a kind friend took out a paper and read to me a short extract from a discourse upon faith. I very soon detected the author of the extract; my friend was reading to me from one of my own sermons. Without saying a word he just left it to my own conscience, for he had convicted me of committing the very fault against which I had so earnestly declaimed."

- Before we move on to verse 2, there's something else here that I think we'd be grossly remiss to not take note of as it relates to the timing.

- David has just about a year and a half left in what ends up as ten years of trials and testing before Saul dies and he becomes king of Israel.

- The point being is that David is giving up and tossing in the towel so to speak, when it won't be that much longer for him to hang in there.

The story is told about a discouraged minister who once dreamed that he was standing on the top of a great granite rock, trying to break it with a pickaxe. Hour after hour he worked on with no result. At last he said; "It is useless; I will stop." Suddenly a man stood by him and asked, "Were you not allotted this task? and if so, why are you going to abandon it?" "My work is in vain; I can make no impression on the granite," was the minister's reply. Then the stranger solemnly replied, "That is nothing to you; your duty is to pick, whether the rock yields or no. The work is yours, the results are in other hands; work on." In his dream the minister saw himself setting out anew his labor, and at his first blow the rock flew into hundreds of pieces.

- Sadly, David will end up creating for himself the very thing he was hoping to avoid, which is that of thinking this path would make it easier.

- As hard and demanding as being in God's will is in our lives, it's infinitely more difficult and demanding to not be in God's will for your life.

- In other words, while obedience to God can be extremely difficult sometimes, disobedience to God can be even more difficult all the time.

2 Then David arose and went over with the six hundred men who were with him to Achish the son of Maoch, king of Gath. 3 So David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each man with his household, and David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite, and Abigail the Carmelite, Nabal's widow. 4 And it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath; so he sought him no more.

- This begs the question of why David would go back to of all places Gath as Goliath's hometown, which is where he'd actually been before.

- The first time was back in chapter twenty-one, when he flees from Saul, only to end up feigning madness when the people recognized him.

- Actually, by David doing this he is able to escape from Gath, and even pen Psalms 34 and 56 after God delivered him from the Philistines.

- However, we still have the question of why David would think that by going back to Gath, he would be safe. Here are a couple of thoughts:
- Everybody knows that David is a refugee of sorts in running from Saul and as such, he doesn't pose the threat that he once would've been.
- David now has six hundred men with him, and it may very well be that the Philistines now saw this as having a military advantage for them.
- Sadly, David running away to escape has impacted six hundred men and their families who are disenfranchised from God's people as well.
- The reason I point this out is because it speaks to the profound impact our decisions can have on other people, whether we realize it or not.
- I suppose it should come as no surprise that the profound impact this decision has on David himself is he pens no Psalms while in Gath.

F.B. Meyer - "The sweet singer was mute. He probably acquired a few new strains of music, or even mastered some fresh instruments, while sojourning at Gath, a memory of which is perpetuated in the term *Gittith*, a term, which frequently occurs in the inscriptions of the psalms composed afterward. But who would barter a song for a melody, a psalm for a guitar? It was a poor exchange."

- It is interesting to note that the term *Gittith* that F.B. Meyer refers to is the instrument on which Psalms 8, 81 and 84 were to be played on.
- The significance of this is this instrument was believed to be invented in Gath, which would seem to indicate that David learned to play it.
- The reason I mention this is that often times, God will bring a new song and even a new instrument for His glory out of our Gath seasons.

5 Then David said to Achish, "If I have now found favor in your eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there. For why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you?" 6 So Achish gave him Ziklag that day. Therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day. 7 Now the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was one full year and four months.

- As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter it's hard to watch as David seeks to find favor in the eyes of Achish so he can get Ziklag.
- Then, if that weren't bad enough, we're told that David, as well as all his men and their families would live there for a year and four months.
- What's interesting is though David now has his own city, and with it a perceived freedom and safety, he is far from God and God's people.

8 And David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites. For those nations were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as you go to Shur, even as far as the land of Egypt. 9 Whenever David attacked the land, he left neither man nor woman alive, but took away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came to Achish.

- It seems that it's going from bad to worse for David in that he's become no better than a robber and a murderer as he raids the enemies.
- To me, this is evidence of how David is on his own doing whatever he thinks he needs to do, which is why he's not seeking the Lord at all.
- One has aptly noted that, he does all of this without the approval or guidance of God, as he fights wars for profit instead of for God's honor.

10 Then Achish would say, "Where have you made a raid today?" And David would say, "Against the southern area of Judah, or against the southern area of the Jerahmeelites, or against the southern area of the Kenites." 11 David would save neither man nor woman alive, to bring news to Gath, saying, "Lest they should inform on us, saying, 'Thus David did.' " And thus was his behavior all the time he dwelt in the country of the Philistines. 12 So Achish believed David, saying, "He has made his people Israel utterly abhor him; therefore he will be my servant forever."

- Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a moment before we bring the study to a close, as I highlight some lessons we can take home with us.
- First, notice how David is lying, then seeking to cover up his lie to Achish by killing all the men and women so nobody could expose his lie.
- Second, notice also David seems to be experiencing a measure of perceived success in his deceptive plan to dwell amongst the enemy.

- Here's where I'm going with this, David thinking he's gotten away with this cover up, will eventually feed into a much greater cover up later.
- Of course what I'm speaking of is his murder of Uriah to cover up adultery with his wife Bathsheba. In other words, this formed a pattern.
- Here in lies the take away, it's been said that we would do well to deal mercilessly with sin or eventually sin will deal mercilessly with us.

Though not written about Gath, one has to wonder if David's propensity for lying wasn't on his heart when he penned Psalm 120:1-2: 1 In my distress I cried to the LORD, And He heard me. 2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips And from a deceitful tongue.

Of David's lying, one commentator wrote, "Perhaps we can justify his raiding, looting, and slaying the tribes mentioned for these tribes were ancient enemies of Israel and they were allies of the Philistines, Israel's enemy, but we cannot justify his lies to Achish. In the New Testament era, lying is judged more severely. When God judged sins in the Old Testament era, He took into consideration the age and the culture in which men lived."

- Here's a second take away one can be deemed successful by the standard of the world yet be anything but spiritual in the eyes of the Lord.
- In other words, just because I seem to pull off or get away with my clever ideas and plans, doesn't mean that it's a sign of spiritual maturity.
- We do err greatly, in the ministry especially, when make decisions based solely on the outward accomplishments of a particular individual.
- Thankfully, this failure on the part of David, won't have the final word in the life of David, this because, God is both merciful and gracious.

I'll close with this commentary, which I think says it best, "...it pleased God to leave David to himself in this, as well as in other particulars, that those might be sensible demonstrations of the infirmities of the best men; and of the necessity of God's grace, and daily direction and assistance; and of the freeness and riches of God's mercy, in passing by such great offences."